

Unshackled

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/14828516) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/14828516>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	Choose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	F/M , Other
Fandom:	Rotkäppchen Little Red Riding Hood (Fairy Tale) Little Red Riding Hood (Fairy Tale)
Relationship:	Big Bad Wolf/Little Red Riding Hood
Character:	Big Bad Wolf , Rotkäppchen Little Red Riding Hood , Original Characters
Additional Tags:	Consent Issues , Bestiality , Watersports , Size Kink , Size Difference , Desperation , sexual fantasy about bug-shaped deity , this is a tag now , Overstimulation , Multiple Orgasms , Mating Cycles/In Heat , Knotting , Masturbation , Sex Toys , Rough Sex , Xenophilia , Magic , Transformation , Rutting
Collections:	Fandom 5K 2018
Stats:	Published: 2018-06-02 Completed: 2018-06-18 Chapters: 2/2 Words: 13778

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by [naughty_sock](#)

Summary

Red has an itch that needs to be scratched, and she's sick and tired of the small-minded rules of her home town which prevent her from doing so.

The wolf has been enslaved to a wizard, who uses him to kill and frighten people into lining his own coffers.

After five years, the need to mate temporarily overpowers the spell that holds him prisoner, and the wolf is determined to get as far away from his jailer as he can.

Unfortunately, Red may unwittingly foil that plan.

Chapter 1

The woodcutter swung his ax and cut into the trunk of the beech tree. Over and over, he repeated the motion, the muscles of his back and shoulder moving with practiced smoothness beneath the fabric of his shirt.

In the shadows of the forest, Thondag watched.

He waited patiently until the woodcutter had hewed a triangular shape out of the tree and paused, panting, to wipe the sweat from his brow. When the man rested his tool against a tree stump and reached for the water skin on top of it, Thondag turned away.

His footsteps were silent, the distorting shimmer of spellwork clinging to the soles of his boots. He stopped beyond a close standing crops of firs and regarded the giant, gray wolf that waited there.

The animal had bared its teeth, and though Thondag was by no means a short man, the wolf's shoulder came half-way up to his chest, putting Thondag's throat within easy reach of its muzzle.

Yet, Thondag was not afraid. He raised a hand and dismissed the wolf with a contemptuous sneer.

"Kill him," he commanded, pointing towards the woodcutter. "Make sure the body is found."

The wolf snarled, and Thondag felt a spark of resistance in the animal's mind.

He sighed. Five years, and the fool still tried to defy him.

Pulling on the shallow trickle of magic to which he had access, he focused on the spell engraved into the silver cuff on his wrist. His gaze bore down on the wolf, and he could feel the resonance in the chain around the beast's neck as the magic shredded the gossamer threads of its will.

The wolf closed its muzzle. Its head came up, and with barely a look towards its master, it bounded into the trees.

Satisfied, Thondag turned away.

Behind him, the woodcutter screamed.

"Red."

Jonah moaned her name, swallowing the last consonant with a sharp puff of air when she pushed her hand down his pants. His erection slid through her grip, his soft skin warm and moist as she rubbed the sticky drops of pre-come into his flesh.

Red made an eager, humming noise against Jonah's throat before she grazed his Adam's apple with her teeth. Her action was rewarded with a gasp as Jonah bucked his hips into her hand. She'd spent the past hour sucking, licking, and nibbling every inch of Jonah's skin to which he'd given her access, and her whole body was vibrating with tension as the heat inside her abdomen was fast becoming unbearable.

She was a little surprised that she hadn't spontaneously combusted, yet.

"We shouldn't do this," Jonah whispered hoarsely, his tone heavy with the kind of desperation that sent sparks of lightning up her spine.

Red laughed softly and pressed her tongue against the hammering pulse on the side of his throat. Her underwear was utterly soaked with her arousal.

"I know."

She squeezed his cock and twisted her wrist on the upstroke.

Jonah shuddered.

"We really need to stop," he panted even as his finger dug harder into her hips.

Red nipped gently at his earlobe. "No one will know," she whispered.

It was the wrong thing to say. Jonah stiffened, the lust-dazed look fading from his eyes. He took hold of her wrist, forcing her to stop. The back of his head thumped against the wall of Mother Day's temple – they had chosen a secluded spot in the small garden behind the temple for their illicit tryst.

"I would know," he said when he'd caught his breath.

The steady look in his eyes told her that she wouldn't get any further with him today.

Maybe not ever.

Withdrawing her hand, Red huffed in annoyance. "I hate these stupid rules."

"I know. So do I," he replied and pressed a kiss against her temple.

"Then why won't you break them?" she asked too irritated to accept his affection. She pulled away from him and shoved her hands into the pockets of her pants.

Ignoring her question – the same way he'd done every time she'd asked it before – Jonah cupped her cheek.

"Marry me," he said. "Marry me, and we will never have to stop again." A smile lit up his bright, blue eyes. "We could do this every day. *All day*," he whispered against her mouth.

Red couldn't meet his eyes. "We're too young to get married," she said and turned her head away.

Jonah sighed and stepped back. He ran a hand through his sandy colored hair, a note of frustration creeping into his voice. Red couldn't exactly blame him. They'd had this argument before. "No, we're not. You will join the city guard this fall, and I've completed my apprenticeship at my father's mill. We're ready to start a life together."

As usual, the mere notion of marriage was enough to make Red want to run. She ground the soles of her boots into the cobblestones beneath her feet in an effort to stay where she was.

It wasn't that she didn't like Jonah, but she didn't want to settle yet. Instead, she wanted to get out of Briarwood and see the world. And even though her mother was the captain of the city guard, and Red had been groomed to join their ranks from an early age, she wasn't at all sure that she wouldn't rather follow the same calling her grandmother had, and become a mage instead. She had the

ability to do so, her innate power to shape magic having manifested when she'd reached puberty.

However, that was not something she could discuss with Jonah. He was highly superstitious when it came to magic, and to Red's mind, that was just one more reason not to marry him.

Even if that meant that she would have to take care of her own pleasure for a while longer. Her desire to share her body was not worth trading for a future she did not want.

The sun had crested the treetops by the time Thondag called him to his side again.

His sleep had been restless, and he'd turned and thrashed on the ground until his fur was coated with clumps of earth and grass. His entire body seemed suffused with warmth, and he felt as if he was running a fever. All morning, he'd had to fight against the urge to find a fallen tree to rub his belly against the bark in order to relieve the strange sensation that had taken hold of his body.

He rose, panting when he heard his master's voice inside his head, his body obeying the command before his mind was fully aware of it. When he realized that he had already crossed half of the courtyard of the abandoned monastery that had once been dedicated to Mother Night, he snarled in dismay and willed his body to resist.

To his utter surprise, his legs stopped moving.

He looked down at his paws in bewilderment.

Though the spell that was woven into the narrow silver chain he wore around his throat prevented him from disobeying a direct order, it had become a point of pride for him to resist the mindless compliance of his body until he was at least fully aware of what he was told to do.

During his first year of his imprisonment, he had lost more than just autonomy over his body. Feeling his muscles obey his master's will even before Thondag's words had completely manifested inside his head, had almost killed his spirit. He'd left himself drowning in hollow, helpless despair, his memories, his sense of self, slipping further and further away with every day he'd spent under Thondag's control.

It had taken a tremendous amount of willpower and discipline to delay his response for even just one second, and though many would regard it as a meaningless show of defiance, to him it meant everything.

It was the last, fragile thread of hope to which he clung, when resignation threatened to pull him under, when he saw nothing but bleakness stretch before him, his body and future enslaved to Thondag, the Wizard.

Except, right now, he was standing on the rough cobblestones of the courtyard, and for once his body seemed no more inclined to follow Thondag's orders than his mind was.

He had no idea what was happening.

He took a cautious step back, not really believing that his legs would actually follow through on the motion.

They did.

His heart seemed to stall inside his chest, only to start hammering a wild staccato seconds later.

For five years, he'd dreamed of breaking free. In his fantasies he had envisioned himself bounding through the forest, howling at the sky, his heart full to overflowing with incandescent joy.

In reality, the first emotion that slammed into him was fear.

He looked towards the wooden gate in front of him. The right leaf had been pushed open, leaving enough of a gap to slip through. He could make it. He could escape. All he had to do was run.

He whimpered, his head sinking between his shoulders. Thondag would be furious.

Are you really so cowed that you would stay? a voice inside him roared, and he flinched.

Once, that voice had belong to him. Once, it had even had a name – back when he'd still been brave.

It was the realization that he couldn't even remember the last time that he'd heard it speak that finally made him move, and with a snarl trembling along his lip, he bounded towards the gate.

“Stay! Don't move!”

Thondag's voice thundered both in his ears and inside his head, and his body froze mid-motion.

No, he wailed, cursing himself for his hesitation. If he'd only acted faster, if he hadn't been too stunned and too afraid to seize his chance...

“How did you do that?” Thondag asked as he reached his side.

The wizard's hand came to rest on top of his head, and he tried to flinch away from the touch, but Thondag's command held him - unyielding - once more.

He felt Thondag's presence in his mind, moving beyond the constraints of the magical bond that held him in its thrall, moving deeper, deeper, deeper, turning over this thought and that, examining a memory here and another there, until he pierced the very core of him. He wanted to howl at the invasion, wanted to thrash against the force that crushed his resistance. He was helpless, always helpless, every hour, every minute of his miserable life completely at his master's mercy.

All because he'd let precious seconds slip by, because he'd been too scared to act, to run away. He cursed himself a fool thrice over, a coward, a pathetic cur, and his self-directed anger skewered him with the force of a red-hot poker.

And then Thondag touched something inside of him, something deep and warm and delicate, something ravenous and dark, something... private. The dichotomy of emotions that his touch unearthed bewildered and frightened him, and he imagined himself snarling and snapping at his master's hand.

No, he growled silently. *You can't have this. You shouldn't see this. This is mine.*

Thondag pulled out of his mind, a disgusted expression on his face. He retrieved his hand and wiped it on his dark green hunter's cloak, as if he'd accidentally put it into a bucket of slime.

“Oh,” he said, sneering. “You're going into rut.”

Rut, he thought bewildered. *I'm going into rut?*

Dimly, he remembered that his body had such a need. A kaleidoscope of half-forgotten memories spun through his mind, a hazy recollection of feeling uncomfortably warm even in the cold of winter, an image of rutting his cock against a moss-covered rock in a futile attempt to find relief.

Fragments of the dreams that had kept him rolling around all night resurfaced. A human woman with long, dark hair, wearing a blue dress and a beckoning smile. Freckles dusting her cheeks, her shoulders, and all the way down the elegant curve of her naked back.

He wondered at that dream, curious that it should be about a human woman instead of a female wolf, but his interest faded as another memory rose before his eyes. Even though it wasn't real, could not possibly be true, he remembered the sensation of her naked skin, warm and soft next to him, had the vague notion of a hayloft giving them shelter, heard her cries of passion as he mounted her, felt the heat and velvet texture of her cunt as he sheathed himself inside her.

Even though he was awake now, the intoxicating scent of her sex was in his nose, and he felt his cock throb, felt it harden and slide out of its protective sheath.

He tried to shift, desperate for friction, but his master had still not given him leave to do so.

Instead, Thondag reached for the satchel at his side and adjusted the strap that hung diagonally across his broad chest. Opening the flap, he retrieved a small vial from its recess.

"I didn't think you were due for another month at least, but thankfully, I'm always prepared," Thondag said as he unstopped the vial and held it up against the sun.

"Mmmh," he said, and a sharp V appeared between his eyebrows. He tilted the vial from one side to the other, scrutinizing the purple liquid within. "Yes," he finally said with faint approval. "It seems to have settled by now."

Open up, Thondag commanded silently, and though he fought the compulsion, he felt his body obey.

The liquid dripped onto his tongue, and he wanted to flinch away from the freezing cold and abhorrent taste that instantaneously coated his tongue. For a moment he was afraid that the liquid had actually turned his flesh to ice, but the sensation faded as the drops trickled down his throat. He swallowed convulsively, gagging as the vile flavor and the cold spread from his throat down into his stomach. The liquid left a numbness in its wake that did not vanish once his blood flow had brought warmth back to the areas it had touched.

He felt the muscles in his lower body seize, his arousal almost painful, until it too was doused like a flaming log that had been tossed into the sea.

Thondag, who had watched him intently, nodded in satisfaction when he saw his body relax.

"Good," he said. "Now, lie down."

Though his mind was still reeling, his body obeyed.

"Roll over to the fountain," Thondag commanded.

His body twisted and rolled as he threw his weight to the side over and over until his back came to rest against the circular wall of the ornamental fountain in the middle of the courtyard.

Thondag smirked. It was not a pleasant sight. "Bite your tail," he said.

It hurt, but he did as he was told, angling his teeth so that he mostly bit down on his shaggy, dark fur.

"Harder," Thondag said as he leaned forward.

Breathing rapidly against the pain, his teeth ground down until he could no longer hold in the whimper that rose in his throat.

"Let that be a lesson to you, and never disobey me again." He put the empty vial back into the satchel, and regarded him coolly.

"Now, go off to Briarwood and hide close to the road. I want you to kill the first person who leaves the city walls. I want you to make sure that you are seen. It's time to make these fools realize that none of them are safe."

"I want you to be careful when you're on the road."

Stifling a yawn, Red nodded. "I will. I promise."

She'd woken from fitful slumber full of heated dreams that had left her thighs damp with arousal and tension coiling tightly inside her. Blinking blearily against the early morning light, she'd recalled snippets of dreams in which Jonah had bent her over the millstone and taken her roughly from behind as they anxiously listened to his parents' voices approaching beyond the doors.

It had been a good dream, and she'd been aching for a thick, hard cock to ream her good and proper when she'd woken up. In lieu of that, she'd tried to alleviate her suffering with her fingers. Impatiently, she'd pushed her hand between her legs and buried two digits in her sopping pussy, groaning with relief.

The flutter of wings at her open window had barely distracted her, and she'd merely glared defiantly at the crow that had perched on the sill as she pumped her fingers in and out of her body at an ever-increasing pace.

"You'll have to wait till I'm done," she'd told her grandmother's messenger.

The crow had tilted its head and had watched her, and the spark of awareness in its eyes had made Red shiver deliciously.

There was something enticing about being watched as she touched herself – a habit that was also frowned upon by the ruling council of Briarwood, though it was far more difficult to enforce than the ban on pre-marital intercourse.

A moment later, the crow had taken off, and barely a minute after that her mother had knocked on her door, telling her that her grandmother was sick, and that she had requested that Red bring her enough food to last the week as it was unlikely that she would be able to make the trip to town.

And while her mother *did* knock first, she had the bad habit of opening the door immediately thereafter, heedless of any response, and so Red had barely had enough time to yank her fingers out

of her cunt before her mother had barged in.

As a result, she was both tired and frustrated as she fastened her long, red riding hood about her shoulders.

The crow perched on her mother's kitchen table, a handful of seeds at its feet. Red could have sworn it was laughing at her.

"We found another body last evening," her mother said as she tried to pack a basket with everyday supplies while lacing up her uniform at the same time. She looked harried. "It was one of the woodcutters. He looked as if some great beast had torn him apart." She paused. "I really shouldn't let you go alone."

Red finished lacing up her boots before she walked over to her mother and covered her hands with her own.

"You know that I can take care of myself."

Her mother pulled away from her with an uneasy look. Like Jonah, she was wary of magic, and had been absolutely furious when she'd first learned that her own mother had started to teach Red how to bend magic to her will. It had taken them a long time to settle into an uneasy cease-fire on the subject, and Red still felt her mother's disappointment keenly whenever the topic arose.

She'd made her peace with that, or at least that's what she told herself. In any case, she was determined not to fret about her mother's disapproval when the skills she'd learned from her grandmother allowed her to walk fearlessly into the woods.

In fact, her spirits lifted considerably when she thought of the wooden boxes she kept hidden in her grandmother's attic.

Considering her disappointments with Jonah last evening and her frustration this morning, visiting her grandmother's seemed like an excellent idea.

He was half-way down the hill before he realized that the warmth spreading through his limbs did not come from the exertion of the run.

Shaking his head, he tried to ignore the twinge in his lower extremities, but his muscles started to quiver harder with every stride. However, his master's command did not allow him to pause, and so he kept going until he reached the road at the bottom of the hill. Here, oaks and beeches gave way to wood garlic, ferns and woodruff that lined broad swaths along either side of the well-traveled path.

He leaped across it, careful not to leave any footprints so close to Thondag's lair. In the distance, he could see the temple of Mother Day rising above the city ramparts.

Keeping to the shadows of the fir trees growing on this side of the road, he followed its gently winding path until the sound of an approaching cart forced him to stop. Thondag had demanded that the city guard witness the murder he had been compelled to commit, and he could not draw attention to himself while he was still so far from the gates.

His breathing was labored as he hid behind the trees and waited for the vehicle to pass. His ears flicked back and forth, the rattling of the cart and the sound of hooves thundering uncomfortably in his ears.

Something was wrong. The sounds were too loud, the smell of horse, sweat, and decay too pungent in his nose. Everything seemed heightened, more intense than it ought to be, and his insides were warm, so warm that he wished he could shed his thick, dark coat and plunge into an icy stream.

Panting, he lowered his head between his forelegs to look along his belly. His cock was fully erect, curving against his underside. The hard length was almost purple with the inflow of blood, and a few drops of semen dripped from the tip onto the soil below.

He whimpered.

Though he could still taste the vileness of it on his tongue, whatever Thondag had given him to suppress his rut was obviously not working.

His hind legs trembled as he lowered himself onto his side so he could lean forward to lick the come off his cock. A sensation born in equal measures of pleasure and pain shot through him, and he recoiled.

Memories floated up, and he found himself in a meadow beside a river. The woman in the blue dress laughed up at him, holding out her hand. Shedding her clothes, she waded into the water, and it splashed around him as he dove in next to her. The sun was high in the sky, and she was spread out on a large, flat rock while he licked drops of water off her skin. She opened her legs to him, and he entered her eagerly, roughly, making her scream.

He opened his eyes.

The cart and horses had passed him long ago, and the road was clear.

He did not get up to continue on his path.

Instead, he curled around his cock, praying that the throbbing would stop, that this sweet agony would pass.

"How are you feeling?" Red asked as she sat down at her grandmother's bedside.

Concern filled her as she took in the older woman's pale countenance and clammy skin. Pressing her hands to her grandmother's forehead, she was unsurprised to find that she had a fever.

Nevertheless, her grandmother shooed Red's hand away dismissively.

"Oh, it's not as bad as it looks. I was out dancing in the moonlight yesterday, and my bones are getting too old for that kind of excitement, that's all. I'll be right as rain in a day or two."

Red's eyebrows shot up. "Dancing in the moonlight?" she asked. "With or without your clothes?"

Her grandmother leveled her with an imperious look. "Without them, of course. One does not dance with Father Death while being covered up. It rather defeats the purpose of the whole exercise," she said with a wink.

Red snorted, not sure if she believed the tale. "If you say so. I collected fresh herbs along the way. Would you like me to brew you a kettle?"

Her grandmother patted her hand with an indulgent air.

"That would be lovely, dear."

By the time the water had reached its boiling point, Red had prepared a light meal to go with the tea. Taking the kettle from the stove, she let it cool for a moment before pouring the water over the fragrant herbs into the cups she'd arranged on a wooden tray.

While she waited for the tea to steep, she flipped through one of her grandmother's leather bound tomes on spell craft. As fascinated as she was by the practice, her grandmother's words had drawn her not to the complicated lessons that separated a mage from a wizard, but to a series of artwork depicting Father Death and his Huntsmen.

The parchment crackled softly beneath her hands as she smoothed her fingers over the detailed images.

According to legend, Father Death, Mother Day, and Mother Night celebrated the turning of each season by seeding magic into the hearts and bodies of those they deemed worthy of the honor.

They replenished their wellsprings by sharing in the joys and delights of their flock, and Father Death, in particular, was notorious for his sprawling bacchanals, in which food, wine, and physical pleasure was shared freely and often.

The drawings in the spell book portrayed one of these orgies, and Red had been fascinated by them ever since she'd first sneaked a look, when her grandmother had been out collecting apples from the small orchard behind the cottage.

Father Death was an imposing figure. Like his huntsmen, he was a towering creature half animal, half man, but while his acolytes bore the features of stags, wolves, boars, and foxes, he sported the abdomen and thorax of a burying beetle, with his lower legs altered to support a bipedal gait, and his upper legs ending in segments shaped to resemble human hands. His head was closer to that of a man, but his jaws were comprised of mandibles, and a set of long, feathery antennae swayed above black compound eyes.

In the book, he and his Huntsmen enacted more fascinating forms of sexual depravity than Red could have ever imagined. The first time, she'd stared at the pictures with a slack-jaw and bulging eyes, her face flushing scarlet. She'd been so scandalized that she'd slammed the book shut and rammed it back into its place on the bookshelf.

But lying in her bed, alone at night, with her hands between her legs, the images had spun before her eyes, and when she'd climaxed, it had seemed as if fireworks had exploded in the very center of her brain.

To this day, she used them in her fantasies, and her orgasms always seemed just a little more intense when she thought of Father Death bending her over his altar in the middle of the festivities and fucking her senseless while his Huntsmen and dozens of men and women watched.

With a smile, Red closed the book and picked up the tray. Her fantasies would have to wait just a little while longer.

Judging by the progress of the sun, an hour had passed, and the rut had him firmly in its grasp. It would not let him go. For more than five years, his body had been denied, and now it demanded its due.

Five years, his master had kept him on a leash – suppressing his natural urges with the same magic that kept him enslaved to his voice. For five years, Thondag had sent him out to kill and maim, treating him as no more than a tool to serve his purpose, reaping fat rewards, once the villagers became desperate enough to pay him to hunt down the mysterious beast that roamed their fields and alleyways.

He whined softly as he shifted on the ground and bent his spine to lick at his cock again. It wasn't enough. He needed to bury himself inside a mate, needed to rut into her, knot her, and fill her with his come until he was sated. *If* he would ever be sated. With desire surging through every cell in his body, it was hard to imagine that he would ever want to spend a moment without being buried to the hilt inside a warm, wet pussy again.

Overwhelmed by the needs of his body, it took him a long time before he became aware that the pressure inside him was no longer solely caused by his desire. He continued licking at the hard length jutting from his body, trying to alleviate his torment, when he gradually became aware of his master's voice in the back of his mind.

Used as he was to Thondag's commands coming across loud and clear, the unfamiliar dullness of the connection startled him.

What are you doing? Thondag asked, his voice floating to him as a hollow whisper.

He hesitated. For five years, neither his body nor his mind had been his own, and he loathed to share something so private, loathed to give Thondag a piece of himself to which he had no claim.

Answer me!

And that's when he realized... realized that he did not feel compelled to respond.

Shocked, he rolled onto his stomach and jumped up, eyes-wide, heart pounding. He waited, barely daring to breathe. Seconds ticked by, but the compulsion did not assert itself.

I said, answer me! Thondag roared.

The volume of his master's voice rose inside his head, and he could sense Thondag close the distance between them. He also sensed the notes of disquiet, of worry, of anger, of mounting panic that traveled across the bond...

...and the growing urge to heed his master's call as Thondag drew closer.

He ran.

He didn't think, but simply followed his instincts.

As he propelled himself forward, he could feel the connection fade away, like a shadow that became diminished by the rising sun.

Elated, he howled at the leafy canopy above him. Relief and a sense of hope, still fragile and tinged with doubt took root inside his heart. The taste of freedom was on his tongue.

He forced his body to greater speeds, trying to put as much distance between Thondag and himself as he possibly could.

Mere moments later, as he flew past trees and ferns higher than his head, the fear returned as he realized that he might not be able to resist the compulsion once the rut had run its course – maybe even distance would not matter then. Even worse, what if the rut became too strong and overpowered his reason? What if he found a mate? What if he was unable to resist her, unable to keep running, unable to deny the need of his body? What if he threw away his freedom because he couldn't fight against his instincts?

Even now, as he focused all his energy on running as fast as he could, he could feel the feverish heat inside his veins distracting him. His hindquarters quivered, not from exertion, but arousal, and his cock refused to retreat to its sheath, bouncing hard and wanting against the soft fur on his belly every time he lunged forward.

Five years were a long time – a cruel amount of time – to suppress his every need and want. Thondag had reveled in it, using his pent up frustration and aggression for his own purposes, but that had neither quenched nor eradicated them. They had always lurked in the back of his mind, years of shame and fear and anger building up, until...

...until today.

...until the sheer force and intensity of them had become too powerful to be restrained.

He had no illusions about Thondag simply giving up and letting him go. His master might not be a mage, who could bend magic to their will, but he was adapt at wizardry and a good strategist. He'd have made sure that the mage who had sold him the enslavement spell would also prepare him for the eventuality of his slave trying to escape.

Bounding across a clearing, he jumped into a shallow stream as the possibilities of tracking spells and poisoned lures flitted across his mind.

Bile rose in his throat, and he plunged his head into the water, not simply lapping, but gulping down as much of the cool liquid as he could. The cold soothed his aching body and washed the bitterness from his tongue which the liquid from the vial had left behind.

It was hard to admit, but he was woefully unprepared for whatever measures Thondag would employ to force him back to his master's side.

However, once the pain started, he realized that no amount of planning or scheming or forethought would have been enough.

It exploded inside his head with the force of a lightning bolt.

He lost his footing and tumbled to the ground, rolling into a cluster of rocks strewn along the bank of the stream. Screeching, howling sounds of agony rang in his ears, and it took him an endless moment to realize that he was the one making them. His brain felt as if it was pounded by a mallet, and there was a pressure behind his eyes that made him fear his skull would split open at any moment.

Trembling all over, he forced himself onto his paws and snarled. It took everything he had – every last shred of will – to propel himself forward, but he leaped onto the shore and kept running.

After their midday meal, her grandmother helped her practice defensive magic for an hour, before Red asked to stop, a headache beginning to form behind her eyes.

"I should get a little rest anyway," her grandmother said as she reclined into her pillows. "Will you be heading home soon?"

Red shook her head and gathered up the tray she'd left on top of one of her grandmother's low bookshelves.

"No, I'm going to the lake first. Maybe take a swim." She had other plans aside from that, but her grandmother didn't need to know about those.

Nevertheless, the old woman regarded her with a knowing smile.

"You've been spending a lot of time there lately."

Red tried not to blush as she recalled some of her recent excursions to the secluded pool deep inside the woods. "It's a beautiful place," she said, noncommittally.

"Mmh, yes. I suppose it is," her grandmother said, and Red could hear the teasing laugh in her voice. "Well then, enjoy yourself."

Hiding the flush that had crept into her cheeks in spite of her best efforts to keep it at bay, Red turned toward the kitchen. "I will. I'll stop by on the way back. We can have dinner before I leave."

"I would like that."

"Is there anything else you need?" Red asked looking back at her as she used her hip to push against the door.

Her grandmother waved her off, blinking drowsily.

"No, thank you, my dear. Just promise me that you'll be careful. My crow brought news that they found another body," she said.

"I can take care of myself," Red reminded her gently.

Her grandmother nodded. "I know."

Red cleaned the dishes and put away the rest of the supplies she'd brought with her. By the time she cleared the kitchen table, her grandmother was fast asleep.

After casting a last, lingering gaze to the hedonistic drawings in the spell book, Red ascended the steps to her grandmother's attic. She kneeled before a pile of wooden boxes, each one rectangular, some of which were polished and smooth while others were engraved intricately with vines, leaves, and blossoms. Sinking her teeth into her bottom lip, Red trailed her fingers along the lids as heat pooled low in her abdomen.

After a moment's deliberation, she chose a box made of gleaming cherrywood and tucked it under her arm.

Standing up, she hurried down the stairs and grabbed her cloak before she left the cottage. She strode into the forest, eager to reach her destination, desperate to finally give herself the pleasure she'd been craving since last night.

He crashed through the underbrush, his chest heaving. Twigs and thorns were tangled in his fur, and the sharp sting of a laceration on his underbelly made its presence known with every stride he took.

None of it slowed him down.

The pain inside his head was like an avalanche propelling him forward, tumbling, scrambling, careening through the forest with no control over where he was going. All he could do was ride it out and hope that he'd survive.

The chain around his throat burned.

He howled, a high pitched, drawn out sound that echoed in the tree tops and sent every animal in his vicinity scrambling for safety. Between the overwhelming need of the rut and the unrelenting punishment of his master, he was reduced to a mindless beast. There was no more rhyme or reason to his thoughts. Everything had been washed away by the flood of rage descending through the bond.

He was lost, torn between two opposing compulsions, and helpless to follow either one of them.

Red unfastened her cloak and spread it out on the soft grass next to the boulders lining the shore. The lake lay placid and still before her, sunlight reflecting off the calm surface.

The small clearing that opened onto the lakeside was secluded and remote, lined by the darkness of the forest on all sides but the shore. No one ever came here, save for the woodland creatures who used the lake as a watering hole.

Anticipation was coiling low in her stomach as she shed her clothes and knelt on top of her cloak. The spring sun was gentle on her freckled skin, the air not yet warm enough to make her sweat, but not cold enough to make her shiver either.

Her trembling came from a different source.

After smoothing her palms against the lean muscles of her thighs, Red opened the ornate, wooden box.

Amidst the shelter of red velvet lay a curved glass rod, which didn't quite span the length of her forearm but sported a circumference almost as thick as her wrist. The base was bulky and smooth, wide enough to allow her to grip it firmly with both hands.

Red picked up the replica of a human cock and ran her hands along the length of it. She couldn't wait to plunge it into her restless body and fuck herself on it.

A traveling merchant had sold it to her. The woman had been run out of town the second the city council had gotten wind of the lewd items among her wares, but not before Red had seen more than a dozen men and women discreetly purchasing all sorts of fascinating objects hidden beneath soaps and tinctures and fluffy towels dyed in every color of the rainbow.

Too closely observed by her parents, Red had not been able to buy anything while the merchant's stall had been pitched in the market square, but the minute she'd been able to get away unseen, she'd rushed out the city gates, her money satchel clutched tightly in her hand.

She'd caught up to the woman an hour later, out of breath, eyes sparkling with barely contained excitement. By the time they'd parted ways, Red's purse had been almost empty, but her arms had been loaded with half a dozen parcels... which she would never be able to bring home.

She'd hidden them in her grandmother's cottage instead, and even though she was fairly sure that the woman knew exactly what Red kept stashed in her attic, so far, she'd indulgently turned a blind eye to it.

Along with the glass rod, the merchant woman had also sold Red a jar of lubricant, but after her disappointments last night and early this morning, Red didn't need it. Her panties had been soaked through with her arousal since she'd woken up, and burning the images of Father Death and his Huntsmen slaking their lust in every way imaginable into her mind, had brought the need inside her to a fever pitch.

Her breathing labored, she positioned the glass rod beneath her wet and tender pussy and sank down on it with one smooth, deep motion.

A moan tumbled from her lips as the cock filled her, stretching her just a little. When she'd seen it among the merchant's wares, it had looked intimidating, but after making frequent and fervent use of it for a year, she regretted not buying the larger version she had seen displayed.

Still, in combination with her vivid imagination, it had always served its purpose.

Red lifted herself up and pressed her hands against the base. Curling her shoulders forward, she watched the transparent rod reappear from between her swollen, dripping folds, her slick clinging to its smooth surface. The sight alone was enough to make her moan again.

She was already close to coming, her body trembling with a low, simmering desire that had gone unfulfilled too long. Still, she wanted to make this last. Lowering her hips, she took the entire length once more, and as she set a steady pace that was both torturously slow and bound to make her come so hard that she would see stars before her eyes, she imagined that she was one of the men and women, who offered themselves to Father Death.

In her mind, she ran her hands along the hard elytra on his back as he clasped her to him with his human hands and the upper set of his insect legs. He'd lay her out upon the altar – her legs splayed wide – to tease and ravish her body the way it had always been intended to be used.

Red imagined how his antennae would stroke along the curve of her face with deceptive gentleness, before he suddenly slapped her exposed vulva with the tarsus of his middle leg. Crying out, she writhed below him as slick poured from her body and onto the stone slab beneath her. Her chest rose and fell as she sucked air into her lungs before another slap connected with her tender flesh, this one far closer to the delicate bundle of nerves at the top of her dripping slit.

She squirmed and arched beneath him, her body pinned down by the bottomless depth in his black compound eyes. She begged him for more, her voice high and needy, a reflection of the molten desire that seared her flesh. Another hard slap had her coming hard enough to drive the air out of her lungs. Her whole body seized, her leg muscles going rigid as she squirted her release onto his underbelly, and he loomed above her, holding her down.

Even as she desperately clawed at him, she knew there would be no reprieve for her. She'd read the

stories of his debaucheries – committed them to memory. Father Death was ceaseless and unrelenting in his worship of her body. Her eyes rolled into the back of her head when he penetrated her, and back on the lake shore with her cunt tightening around the glass cock, Red wondered what it would feel like to be possessed so completely, to be filled with every inch of his monstrous cock and forced to come over and over until she passed out once her body could no longer handle the pleasure he coaxed from her.

Her mind returned to a series of cross sections in her grandmother's spell book. Red felt a wave of heat fill her body as she impaled herself sharply on the glass rod while she remembered the depiction of Father Death, his penis clasped tightly inside a woman's pussy, his endophallus extending further and further, pushing far beyond her cervix to fill her with his seed.

Red shuddered, as she imagined the telescopic organ piercing her, and she itched to dig her fingers into the soft, flexible membranes that connected the plates of his exoskeleton. With a choked groan, she ground down harder, wishing she could shove the glass rod just as deep.

Breath growing ragged, she sped up, the gentle swell of her breasts bouncing with every move she made. She was burning up, so close to her climax, she could taste it on the back of her tongue.

In her mind, one of the Huntsmen, the giant stag, came up behind her, and as Father Death speared her sopping pussy over and over, the stag tilted her head back over the edge of the altar and palmed his own throbbing cock, offering it to her.

Whimpering, Red inhaled his musky scent and opened her mouth.

On the lake shore, she lifted a hand from the base of the glass cock, and rubbed her fingers harshly against her clitoris.

Inside her head, the stag's cock filled her throat, making her gag, even as she reached for his fur-covered thighs to pull him deeper into her mouth, and Father Death continued to fuck her raw.

In the meadow, Red came with a strangled scream, slick gushing over the shaft, her heart pounding in her throat.

Panting, she fell forward and was only just able to catch herself before her face hit the ground.

Basking in the afterglow, with tremors running through every muscles in her body, Red closed her eyes, and rubbed her cheek against the soft fabric of her riding hood.

This had been worth the wait.

Chapter 2

The pain stopped abruptly.

One minute he was running, dashing heedlessly across the hills, agony gradually drowning his vision in red, then a white so blinding that he collided with the trees in his path and stumbled across their roots.

And just when the world began to fade – black spots dancing before his eyes – the pressure inside his skull ceased so suddenly, so completely, that the shock of it made his forelegs falter beneath the weight of his body. He crashed into the ground, his momentum carrying him forward as he slid against moss covered soil.

He came to rest, panting, his tongue lolling out of his muzzle as he desperately sucked air into his lungs. His entire body felt as if it was on fire.

He didn't know if he'd finally put enough distance between himself and his master, or if Thondag had simply given up, but it didn't matter. The absence of pain was its own reward, and it was all that he cared about.

Closing his eyes, he tried to regain a sense of self and some small semblance of control, but his brain felt sluggish, and his thoughts were slow, every new one feeling as if he'd pulled it out of a giant vat of molasses.

Laboriously, he raised himself onto his paws. His legs were trembling beneath him, and in the void left behind by the pain, his need started to reassert itself. Desire licked along his senses, and his cock pulsed painfully, not in the same way that Thondag had set his nerves on fire, but with the dull, low, throbbing ache of a rut that had too long gone unattended.

He whined.

It was too much. He wanted it to stop. All he wished for was to curl up in a safe and hidden place and sleep for a century or two, but his body wouldn't let him. He had no idea how long he'd been running; the canopy above him was too thick to make out the position of the sun. His skull felt raw, as if someone had scrubbed it out with a wire brush. His bladder was uncomfortably full, but with his cock pulsing painfully with every twitch of his shaking muscles, he did not dare relieve himself.

Still, he could not stay here. Laboriously, he pushed himself onto his paws with some half-formed idea to water a fern or two. His legs were shaking.

Head bent, he took a careful step forward. Then another, and another, until he finally felt steady enough to raise his muzzle and look around.

He'd never been in this part of the forest before. Neither the sight before his eyes, nor the scents that wafted past his nose were familiar beyond the common aspects that were shared by forests everywhere; the rich, dark scent of wet soil, the heavy fragrance of pine needles, the decay hidden beneath the earth, the mingling bouquets of wildflowers on the breeze...

...and the heady scent of female arousal.

He found her on the shore of a lake.

She was naked and asleep, long limbs stretched out on top of a bright, red cloak. Her scent was intoxicating.

Cock pulsing, he circled around her as he approached, his gaze traveling along her body. Her head lay cradled in the crook of her arm, her expression peaceful. A short braid of chestnut hair rested against her shoulder, the copper highlights shimmering in the soft spring sunlight that kissed her resting from.

He gulped as he came to a halt behind her legs. One of her knees was slightly bent, giving him a perfect view of the peculiar object that hid her cunt from his sight. Tilting his head, he regarded it curiously. Her scent was stronger here, and he panted as it filled his nose.

The pressure inside him built, the weight of his bladder only adding to the urge to find release. Wound up like a spring, he felt as if his insides were coiling tighter and tighter until the muscles could no longer contain the tension, until he was bound to snap.

He had to get closer, had to smell her, had to taste.

Placing his paws between her legs, he nosed at the object, trying to make out what it was. The smell of her pussy almost made his legs fold up beneath him. Panting, he gingerly placed his teeth around the object's base. The smooth surface was covered in her slick, making his head spin as his teeth tried to find purchase on the bulky base. It slipped out of his jaws a few times, before he found a grip and slowly pulled it from between her legs.

Her mind was drifting languidly, suspended between sleep and consciousness. Deep beneath the pleasure and the drowsiness, she could feel renewed desire building in her body, and her muscles contracted around the hard rod clenched between her walls.

Though it was still unyielding, it had absorbed the heat of her body now, which fueled her fantasies of Father Death fucking her to the breaking point, of him allowing her to catch her breath before he would take her once again.

She wanted it so badly.

Which is why she barely reacted when the glass cock moved inside her.

At first, she thought it was just a shift caused by the aftershocks that still made her muscles quiver every now and then, but then something cold and wet pressed against the heat between her legs, and her eyes snapped open.

The cock moved again, pressing into her just long enough to make her bite her lip to stop a whimper from tumbling out of her mouth. The pressure ceased, replaced by a sliding sensation as the cock was dragged backwards.

Red contemplated not turning around. She'd fantasized about being fucked by a stranger – about running into some nameless, faceless traveler on the road, who wouldn't hesitate to rut her brains

out the minute she dropped her pants for him.

There was something exciting about the idea of someone coming upon her by the lake, finding her naked and getting aroused by the sight of her pussy stretched around the glass rod... aroused enough that he could not resist... consumed with so much lust that he *had* to take her.

For a moment, Red closed her eyes again, the fantasy unspooling in her mind. The pull between her legs stopped, then the cock was pressed into her again, shifted a little, and then the drag resumed. Her muscles clenched around the rod, and in spite of her best efforts to hold it back, a sound escaped her throat.

Her soft moan made his jaws fall open and his head snap up. The object dropped to the ground. He trembled as he watched her, half of his senses poised for flight, the other half determined to press her down into the grass and shove his pulsing cock inside her before she could run away.

To his relief, she merely shifted on top of her cloak without waking.

Heat raced through his body. Looking down, he took in the thick, long rod that protruded from the object's base, a facsimile of a cock that was coated with her thick, sweet juices.

The scent overpowered him.

He dove for the object, licking at it eagerly, curling his tongue around the length of it and gobbling up her slick. He whimpering softly as it filled his mouth. It was the most delicious thing he'd ever tasted.

His cock was throbbing painfully, and his body burned for more of her. With a growl he tore his head away from the rod and shoved his muzzle between her legs.

Her body twitched, and he froze for half a second, but the need inside him would not be denied. He lapped at the soft, meaty folds between her legs, drowning in her scent and in her taste, reveling in the warmth of her against his tongue. His eyes fell closed as he pushed his snout into her, licking at her insides. She was luscious, heady and musky, and he couldn't get enough of her.

A wolf.

Red blinked, stupefied at the sight of a giant, dark gray wolf lapping at her glass cock. She'd raised her shoulder in order to sneak a look at him along the length of her own body.

The sight of his long pink tongue working along the glass set off fireworks inside her brain. Holding her breath, she let her eyes travel along his powerful muscles until her gaze came to rest on the massive, purple cock swaying between his legs.

She had to bite back a wanton groan. He was so much bigger than her glass cock, and just the idea of his girth stretching her open was driving her nearly mad with need. Heat flooded her body,

pooling deep between her legs, and she could feel the wetness dripping from her folds.

Her fantasy of Father Death was all but forgotten. She remained motionless, hardly daring to breathe, hoping that the wolf would realize that there was a richer source for the taste he seemed to crave nearby and praying to Mother Night that he would take full advantage of it.

To her relief, he did.

She moaned again, and it took every shred of self-control he had left in him to withdraw his tongue and lift his head. To his astonishment, she still appeared to be sleeping.

Keeping his trembling body poised above her, his gaze shifted from her face to the swell of her ass right beneath his nose. Without conscious thought, his tongue slipped out to lick across the soft, warm flesh, and he growled when she shifted against him and pulled her bent knee closer to her chest.

The position tilted her hips, lifting them a little off the ground, and his mouth went dry. Somewhere in the back of his mind, he knew that it was wrong to touch her like this, but he couldn't stop himself. The pull of the rut was too strong, overwhelming any shred of common sense, and even the pressing urge to empty his bladder could not pull him away from her. He needed to mount her, needed to bury his cock inside her soft body and fill her with his seed.

To his frustration, he realized that he couldn't.

He was large, taller than a normal wolf, and she was lying on the ground, the enticing hole of her cunt poised no more than an inch above her cloak. There was no way he could enter her at this angle.

He whined softly and shifted his paws, the rut tearing at him, urging him to take her, to mount her, to make her his.

Desperate, he began lapping at her pussy again, dragging the broad, rough muscle between her velvet lips from the tip of her clit across the length of her slit. Nosing between her butt cheeks, he pushed into her pussy, and felt her tremble against him, felt her shift again, her hips rising another fraction.

Yes, he crooned inside his mind. Yes, lift them up. Let me mount you, sweet, sweet girl.

Eager, ravenous, he licked into her, lapping up the juices that kept poring onto his tongue. He heard her moan again, and suddenly her body shuddered, and his tongue was flooded with her slick, driving him into a frenzy.

His hind legs tapped an erratic beat onto the grass beneath his paws, his cock and bladder screaming for relief, the pressure was almost too much to bare. His injuries – the cuts and bruises, the bite he had been forced to inflict on his own tail – all of them were forgotten, erased from his mind with the same wave of lust and need that had washed away his master's control over him. He was driven entirely by instinct, that primal, savage urge to mate, to pound his cock into the hot, wet pussy of the girl beneath him.

He redoubled his efforts, licking, lapping, pushing deep, and with every flick of his tongue, the

girl's hips rose a little higher, opening herself to him as she pulled her legs beneath her body. She moaned softly once or twice, and the sound pierced his brain, fueling his own desire.

She couldn't possibly be asleep anymore.

Could she? he wondered as a second orgasm wrecked her body, and she mewled low in her throat pushing her cunt hard against his muzzle.

He wrenched his face away from her to look across her shoulder. Impossibly, her eyes were still closed, though her chest was heaving.

Her head rested on top of her forearm, and her mouth was open, her rosy lips drawing breath in shallow pants. While he had eaten her out, she had pulled both her knees beneath her body, pushing her hips high into the air – high enough for him to take her, to bent himself over her and push his cock into her sopping hole.

He licked his snout.

She looked delectable.

His body was shaking more violently, the longer he tried to restrain himself. There was no way she wouldn't wake up once he mounted her. He could hardly believe that she was still asleep even now.

He licked at her again, but he could not deny himself any longer. With a rumbling growl, he pushed himself over her and gathered the muscles in his abdomen. His first thrusts went wild, making his cock sink between the silken softness of her thighs, and he growled again, trying over and over to find her dripping hole, until she arched her spine below him, and he finally hit home.

With one deep thrust he sank into the wetness of her folds and buried his massive length in the tight heat of her body.

It was heaven.

Below him, the girl cried out, her whole body jerking violently.

She was definitely no longer asleep.

Startled, he almost lifted himself off her, some small, long forgotten part of him berating him for forcing himself on her like this, but to his utter astonishment, she pushed her arms backwards, keeping her face buried in the fabric of her cloak, and fisted her hands in the fur of his haunches.

“No. No, don't pull out,” she cried. “Don't you dare. Oh fuck, Mother Night forgive me, this feels so fucking good.”

He felt as if he'd been felled by an ax.

She wanted him inside her. This girl, this perfect, lovely, unknown girl actually want him to fuck her.

His mind still reeling, he belatedly realized that she was still pulling at his fur, pushing her body back against him to force his dick deeper into her tight little pussy.

He growled, desire setting him aflame, burning through any shred of reservation that had tried to manifest. His cock throbbed enthusiastically as his mind was overcome by joy, and he began to pound into her, hard and fast and ruthlessly, determined to take his fill.

The girl cried out, her loud, wanton shouts of pleasure ringing in his ears, spurning him on to go faster, to drive himself into her until they were both sore and bruised and aching. He felt the pressure rise inside him, felt his knot grow thick and hot, and his balls draw tight.

With a whine, he repositioned his hind legs, drew them closer to her body, and arched his spine to get more leverage. He speared her open relentlessly, felt her shake beneath him with every thrust, heard her broken whimpers as her hands released him to claw at the cloak beneath her body.

Whether her tight, hot body convulsed around him within second or minutes, he could not tell. Time had lost all meaning, and all he knew was the bliss, the utter euphoria he felt, when she spasmed underneath him, dragging him across the edge as her muscles tightened brutally around his bulging girth.

With one last, forceful thrust, he shoved his knot into her tender pussy, plugging her so completely that he could feel the raw stretch of her walls around his flesh. He came with a grunt, and his release was so powerful that he lost every last shred of control over his body. His bladder released, filling her with the hot deluge of his piss as well as his come.

She whimpered beneath him, cursing or praying, he was not sure which. His ears were ringing, and he caged her body with his legs, his knot locked tightly inside of her, ensuring that she would take all of him – every last, filthy drop that her quivering muscles could milk from his body.

Beneath him, the girl panted and shivered as she tried to catch her breath. After a moment, she craned her neck to look up at him.

“Mother Night, look at the mess you've made of me,” she said. Her tone was more awed than angry.

Tongue lolling, he made a soft sound in the back of his throat and bent down to lick her cheek. For a moment he felt sated and at peace, the closest he could remember to unfettered happiness. He wanted to stay with her, mate her, rut her, lose himself in the heat of her small, tight body again and again until his rut had run its course. He wanted to make a mess of her until she couldn't think straight anymore.

The same way he hadn't been thinking straight since he'd caught her delectable scent.

He froze, the thought finally piercing the fog inside his lust-addled mind. He hadn't been thinking straight, hadn't been thinking at all. Thondag! He'd been running away from him, he'd been trying to escape, but the second he'd gotten a whiff of her any notion of freedom had fled his head.

A whisper floated through his mind, and fear clawed at the base of his spine. His head snapped up.

Thondag was standing at the edge of the forest, his face red with fury.

Red tried very hard not to think.

If she allowed herself to think, she would have to acknowledge that she had just let a wolf rut her as if she was a mindless bitch in heat.

An animal. She'd let an animal fuck her.

Trembling with the aftershocks of her orgasm, she rested her forehead against her arm.

And, mother night, he'd fucked her good.

Her muscles clenched around the massive knot that stretched her pussy, and she whimpered softly.

She'd never thought anything could feel this good. Her body felt heavy, stuffed to the hilt with every last inch of his hot, throbbing flesh. She could still feel him pulse inside her, painting her insides with even more of his thick come.

And he'd peed in her.

Red moaned.

She'd let an animal fuck her brains out, and he had not only come but urinated inside of her. She could feel the heavy weight of his piss move inside her belly at the slightest shift of her body.

It should feel humiliating.

It should be mortifying.

Instead, the memory alone was almost enough to make her come again.

The walls of her pussy contracted around his knot, and she instinctively pushed back, gasping, trying to push him deeper inside her. She wanted more, *needed* more. She wanted to have the wolf's giant cock pound her quivering pussy until she was too tender to walk tomorrow.

Keeping her eyes closed, she saw herself walking home, staggering through the front gate, her pussy throbbing with each step at the memory of the perversion she had welcomed. In her mind, she saw the disgusted looks on the faces of the villagers when they spied the wolf's come dripping down her thighs.

Red sank her teeth into her bottom lip, surprised that the idea not only filled her with shame, but also gave her a secret thrill. Her body tightened around the wolf's knot. She whimpered as her muscles fluttered around the heavy bulk of him. It was the idea of her mother's horrified face that made her come almost instantly as a wave of humiliation pierced her mind.

It didn't last.

Euphoria washed it away, pulled it back like the ebbing tide, and she gloried in the blunt, high swell of wanton heat that filled her body, when, suddenly, the wolf jerked above her.

She cried out when he moved, not from pain, but overstimulation, and her mind was so overcome with bliss that it took her a second to realize that he was trying to get off her. His knot pulled sharply inside her pussy, and Red saw stars as another climax hit her without warning.

"No," she gasped, hands scrambling frantically for his fur.

She didn't want to think about what it would do to her poor, battered pussy if he pulled out of her before his knot had come down.

He tugged at her again, harder, and Red screamed silently, mouth falling open as all the air vanished in her lungs. An orgasm tore through her, pain riding sharply on its tail, and the muscles in her abdomen convulsed with the agonizing pleasure of it.

"No, stay," she begged, tears pricking at her eyes. Her fingers finally found purchase in his fur, and

she clenched them tightly around the matted strands to keep him inside of her. “Stay,” she repeated, nearly sobbing.

“Yes,” a cold, hard voice intoned ahead of her. “Stay!”

Eyes going wide with shock, she took in the tall, bearded man who was striding toward her. He was dressed in a hunter's garb, brown leathers above a plain gray tunic, his shoulders covered by a dark, green cloak.

His face was distorted by anger, and a sneer of revulsion twisted his thin lips. The look in his eyes made her recoil.

“Who are you?” she called out to him, and she was glad that her voice sounded a lot more steady than she felt.

“It doesn't matter who I am, girl. You'll be too dead to care one way or the other in a moment. Though I suppose I should thank you for distracting my wolf long enough for me to catch him.”

Red's stomach flopped, and for a moment, fear settled into her bones.

She'd never felt this vulnerable before.

She was profoundly aware of the precarious situation in which she was – naked and knotted to a giant wolf, who was even now struggling hard enough to get away from her that she had to sink a spark of magic into her grip in order to hold him.

You are a mage, she reminded herself sternly. Your mother is the captain of the city guard. You've been trained to fight since before you could walk.

Where the thought of her mother had suffused her with guilt only a moment ago, it now became a source of strength. She remembered her lessons, endless hours of combat drills seeping into her mind and etching into her bones until they became second nature to her, no more a conscious effort than drawing breath.

And she remembered the sage advice of her grandmother, urging her to remain calm, to think before she moved.

Healing magic had never been her strong suit, but she did her best to call it to her, weave it into her skin and the sore and tender muscles of her body before pushing it outwards, along the wolf's cock that was still wedged impossibly deep inside her.

With a breath of relief she felt his knot diminish.

The hunter stopped dead in his tracks when the wolf pulled away from her. His cock left her pussy with a filthy, wet popping sound, and Red couldn't suppress a whimper when she felt him tear free, releasing the torrent of piss and come with which he'd flooded her. It gushed out onto her thighs, and Red saw with no small sense of satisfaction that the sight of the mess made the hunter blanch. He pressed a hand to his nose and stepped back, his eyes riveted to the liquid evidence of her debauchery.

“Mother Night,” he choked, close to gagging, and Red rolled her eyes.

As soon as he was no longer tethered to her, the wolf sprang back and turned to flee, but the hunter raised his voice, and this time, Red could feel the threads of magic coiling around his command. “I said STAY!”

The wolf froze, a whine squeezing from his chest.

Red looked at him, a wave of pity rising within her when she met his fearful, tortured gaze.

“Let him go,” she said, pitching her voice low, making it soft and gentle, not as a plea, but to ease the panic behind the wolf’s eyes.

The hunter laughed at her, unaware of the thunder rolling beneath her soothing tone. “You enjoyed that, didn’t you? I saw it on your face. Moaning and begging for it. Tits bouncing all over the place. My, what a nasty little slut you are.”

Anger replaced her fear like a whiplash cracking across unblemished skin. *How dare he*, she thought, her hands clenching in outrage. *Pretending disgust, when he was too fascinated, no, too titillated*, she amended with a pointed look at the bulge tenting his pants, *to look away*.

His sneer growing more profound, the hunter turned towards the wolf. “Kill her.”

She felt, rather than heard, the magic in his voice, like liquid oozing down a string. The wolf started, his muscles bunching, ready to lunge at her, but she could see the war raging behind his eyes. He didn’t want to kill her.

Breathing deeply, Red reached out, her magic skittering along the connection she sensed between wolf and hunter, until it came to rest around the wolf’s neck.

She tilted her head, and in the bright sunlight falling onto the shore, she glimpsed a reflecting spark amidst the trembling, dark gray fur.

“I told you to kill her, you sniveling cur. How dare you disobey me?” the hunter roared.

Out of the corner of her eyes, she saw the man reach for a knife at his belt, and her hands darted forward, past the wolf’s growling muzzle, to wrap around the tiny links of the silver chain that caged his shaking body.

She was a mage. A mage in training, true enough, but a mage nonetheless, and she needed no potions, tokens, or incantations to bend magic to her will. Instead, she let it flow through her, into her hands, and sank it into the metal of the chain.

Release, she demanded, and with the sound of a thunderclap, both chain and spellwork broke.

The wolf reared back, and she could feel the echo of his pain inside her heart as the remnants of the enslavement spell were ripped out of his flesh and tore through his mind.

He growled and twisted away from her.

“I’m sorry,” she said softly, not sure if he could hear her over the hunter’s rage-filled scream. “There was no other way.”

She tried to reach out and sooth him, but before she could act, the hunter grabbed her by the base of her short braid and pulled her roughly to her feet and back against him. She saw the flash of the blade descend towards her chest, and muscle memory kicked in.

She blocked the blow, and broke his wrist, disarming him easily before she whirled on the balls of her bare feet and toppled him to the ground.

He looked up at her, bewildered, and she felt a sharp sense of satisfaction at the stupefied outrage

on his face.

“Didn't expect that, I gather,” she taunted him, and then a giant, gray blur streaked past her as the wolf tore into the fallen man.

Swallowing heavily, Red turned away from the carnage.

She made her way to the lake and waded into the cool water. She did her best to ignore the tearing, shredding sounds behind her and dunked her head below the surface. Now that the adrenalin was fading, the soreness between her legs reasserted itself, and she moaned softly as she cupped her mound and gently rubbed her fingers through her folds to wash away the filth.

By the time she felt clean again, silence surrounded her, and she turned around to find the wolf standing at the shore.

His muzzle was submerged in the water, but his large, dark eyes regarded her steadily.

Red made a concentrated effort not to look at the remains of the hunter.

“Feeling better?” she asked, her voice low and soft.

He swallowed thickly and raised his head, glad that the taste of blood no longer drenched his tongue. Watching her warily, he contemplated her question. Did he feel better?

He was relieved that he was finally free, but mostly he felt raw and hollow, as if he'd been scrapped out on the inside. Released from the spell that had held him prisoner, the rut was also starting to reassert itself, filling him with even rawer, more primal emotions than his rational mind could handle. And on top of all of that, there was the jumbled mess of fear, longing, and anger inside him that worsened every time he looked at her.

He'd felt her magic bleed into his skin. True, she had used it to break the spell that had controlled him, but his experiences with Thondag had left a foul taste in his mouth that permeated all his senses and made him shudder with discomfort. She hadn't used an incantation to break the spell, which meant she was a mage, a young one, but far more powerful than Thondag could ever have hoped to be. The realization that she could probably have killed him at any time while he'd mounted her made him feel vulnerable and exposed, and the only reason he hadn't taken off into the forest was the gentleness he had sensed below her fury when she'd broken the chain around his neck.

That, and the growing ache of his cock, which poked, red and throbbing, against his belly.

It wasn't quite enough to keep him in place when she waded to the shore, but he didn't run away either. Given the turmoil of his emotions, he counted it as a victory.

“I won't hurt you,” she said quietly when she reached the large, rain-smoothed boulders that lined this part of the lakeside. She bent forward, unconcerned with the enticing way it made her small breasts dangle below her torso, and extended her hand. “I promise.”

He stared at that hand, the long, slim fingers that had channeled powerful magic only moments before and felt a shiver run through him.

It was... not an unpleasant sensation.

Taking a step towards her, he wondered if maybe, *just maybe*, he could be brave again.

He looked from her hand to her face and took a deep breath. Closing his eyes, he lowered his muzzle, and pressed the top of his head against her palm.

Her fingers curled into his fur, scratching against his skull. He exhaled in a gusty huff and pushed closer.

Laughing softly, the girl sank to her knees on the flat rock beneath her. “There we go. That's not so bad, is it?”

He growled softly. His paws came to rest on either side of her knees as he brushed his head against her chest, and her fingers slipped along his head to sink into the soft creases behind his ears. A moan rumbled through his chest, and his cock twitched eagerly.

For a second he almost felt content, but then he sensed the softest of whispers across the surface of his mind, and his head snapped back with a much more menacing sound. He bared his teeth in warning.

In spite of this, her face was a picture of excitement, and she tilted her head, eyes sparkling as she looked him over with a wholly new awareness.

“You're not a normal wolf, are you?” she asked.

He stared back at her, caught off guard by her question. *Wasn't he?*

“You're a Huntsman,” she said, a note of awe slipping into her voice. “An acolyte of Father Death. I wasn't quite sure they were even real.”

It was as if her words had opened a sluice gate inside his mind. Memories came tumbling through, years and years of disordered thoughts and images, a great big mess of forgotten days that left him reeling.

He shook his head in a futile attempt to stem the flow. It was too much, too fast, too overwhelming. He struggled not to get lost in the riptide of his own mind, but feared that he would have succumbed, had her sweet voice not thrown him a lifeline.

“Can you shift?” she asked curiously.

He blinked up at her, his entire being focused on the rise and fall of her chest, the scent of her skin that floated into his nose, now that her body was drying in the sun.

She smiled at him. “Do you want to?”

Shift, he thought, mulling over the concept, but even before he had fully examined the idea, he felt his body react, as if the word had been enough to trigger an action it had performed a thousand times before.

Yes, he said with sudden elation, and to his own surprise, he was sure that she'd heard him, not because she'd invaded his mind, but because he'd projected his thought directly into hers.

He snatched up another memory as it floated by – that of his body poised between two different shapes – and exhaled in relief as he began to change. It felt good.

It felt right.

Red jumped to her feet when the wolf's body stretched and twisted. Limbs extended, his fur grew shorter, and a few seconds later, the Huntsman rose before her, upright on his hind quarters, half animal, half man.

His legs retrained the shape of a wolf's, long heels ending in a pair of giant paws, but his muscles were thicker, his thighs so broad that she could not have spanned them with both of her hands. Her gaze skimmed over his barrel-chested torso, which, like the rest of him, was still covered in short, gray fur, to the muscular arms that ended in human hands with thick, long fingers. His eyes were human, a deep, dark brown with flecks of amber, but the rest of it was still more muzzle than mouth, shorter, yes, but with rows of sharp teeth and even sharper canines. He looked powerful, grotesque... alluring.

Without conscious thought, Red moistened her lips when her gaze fell to the cock rising, red and turgid, from between his legs. Huge and veined, it curved against his abdomen, pre-come dripping from the bulbous head. She swallowed thickly as her pussy walls clenched around the emptiness inside her.

Though she could just see the beginning swell of his knot at the base, his cocked resembled neither that of human or wolf. A dozen raised ridges encircled the length of it, and Red felt her knees buckle at the mere thought of feeling the texture and weight of him rub along her inner walls. She was sure the friction alone would make her lose her mind.

Knees suddenly too weak to support her weight, she sat down heavily on a boulder behind her. Her mouth felt parched while her cunt was positively drenched.

The Huntsman followed her gaze and hunched over slightly, almost as if he was embarrassed to expose himself to her like this. Which was ridiculous, considering how he'd fucked her brains out less than half an hour ago.

His cock pulsed with the motion of his hips, and Red bit back a moan.

I... I'm in rut, he said, his voice clear and deep inside her mind. He sounded apologetic.

Red smiled. "I know." She had no idea how long his rut would last, but she had high hopes that he would let her help him through it. To that end, she leaned back on her hands to make herself more comfortable, and if the motion caused her tits to jut out a bit more prominently, well then that was certainly no more than a happy accident.

The way his gaze devoured her body raked her with hot and cold shivers from the tips of her hair all the way down to her toes.

I'm sorry that I took advantage of you, he said, and Red bit back a smile. He didn't sound very sorry at all.

"Well," she said with a mischievous glint in her eyes as she opened her legs for him. "Would you like to take advantage of me again?"

His gaze flew from her cunt to her face, and then thunder rolled through his chest, and he sank to

all fours. Red moaned, soft and needy. The heat in his eyes pinned her to the ground as he stalked towards her, the throbbing, hard length of his cock swaying below his body.

The sight of him made her light-headed.

There were questions she wanted to ask, and a story he needed to tell, but all that could wait until his rut had run its course... until they'd both wrung every last drop of pleasure from their bodies, and the conflagration inside the Huntsman's mind had burned away the harshest edges of the enslavement that had bound him for so long.

Until he could look at the dawn with hope instead of dread.

Until he was himself again.

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